



South Mountain Corridor Study

Citizens Advisory Team Meeting Summary

Date: August 23, 2007
Time: 5:30 p.m.
Location: South Mountain Community College

CAT Members Attending:

Camilo Acosta, Arlington HOA
Patrick Panetta, Ahwatukee Village Planning Committee
Sandy Bahr, Sierra Club
Eric Baim, Silverado Ranch HOA
Chad Blostone, The Foothills HOA
Al Brown, AzPHA
Clayton Danzeisen, Maricopa County Farm Bureau
Peggy Eastburn, Estrella Village Planning Committee
Michael Goodman, Phoenix Mountains Preservation Council
Don Jones, Southwest Valley Chamber of Commerce
David Lafferty, City of Tolleson
Cathy Lopez, Foothills Reserve HOA
Jim McDonald, City of Avondale
Dave Olney, Valley Forward
John Rodriguez, Lakewood HOA
Jack Sellers, East Valley Partnership
Brian Smith, Calabrea HOA
Timothy Stone, Bougainvillea HOA
Carola Tamarkin, Ahwatukee Foothills Chamber of Commerce
Terry Tatterfield, Kyrene Elementary District
Jim Welch, Mountain Park Ranch HOA

CAT Members Absent:

Gila River Indian Community – District 4
Lisa Bray, South Mountain/Laveen Chamber of Commerce
Tamala Daniels, South Mountain Village Planning Committee
Michael Norton, Laveen Villiage Planning Committee
Nathaniel Percharo, Pecos Road/I-10 Landowners Association
Laurie Prendergast, Laveen Citizens for Responsible Development
Dave Williams, Arizona Trucking Association

Staff and Consultants

Timothy Tait, ADOT
Dean Howard, PDG
Bill Vachon, FHWA
Dan Lance, ADOT
Joy Butler, PDG

Tom Keller, KCA
 Fred Erickson, KCA
 Matt Burdick, ADOT
 Mark Hollowell, ADOT
 Bob Hazlett, MAG
 Scott Stapp, HDR
 Michael Book, HDR
 Michael Bruder, ADOT
 Doug Nintzel, ADOT
 Jack Allen, Arcadis

Citizens:

Greta Rogers
 Doug Murphy (Ahwatukee Foothills News)
 Alice Loells
 Kris Cleveland
 Representative Cloves Campbell
 Jim Jochim
 Michael L. Pops
 Bill Ramsay
 Jim La Salvia
 Jerome LaSalvia
 Don Adkins
 Cal Touchin
 Scott Mittelsteadt
 Dutonelli Dnton
 Colleen Sparks (Arizona Republic)

Task/Activity	Who
Welcome and Introductions Discuss Bus Tour Survey Team member questions and comments	KCA
SMCAT Recap & W55 Decision Traffic Study	Matt Burdick, ADOT Bob Hazlett, MAG
Proposed South Mountain Freeway Historical Perspective	Mike Bruder, ADOT

Tom Keller: It looks like we have a quorum. There are a few new faces in attendance tonight. Representative Cloves Campbell is here.

Cloves Campbell: I have heard about this project from people who have expressed their concerns to me. I am happy to be in attendance representing my constituents.

Tom Keller: The people sitting at the main table are with the South Mountain Citizen's Advisory Team. The people sitting along the side wall are with the Arizona Department of Transportation.

There are a number of visitors from the public who are sitting in the back of the room. For the benefit of those people who haven't attended these meetings before, there is a certain protocol that is observed. We ask that everyone in attendance treat each other with respect. At the end of the session, we will allow the public to ask questions. We have created blue question cards that are available in the back of the room. If you have a question, fill out a card and at the end of the meeting we will read and answer and if possible answer the questions.

We have several presentations scheduled tonight, which have numerous maps and graphics. CAT members, please refrain from asking questions until the end. The intent of tonight's meeting is to review the background information on ADOT's recommendation of the 55th Avenue alignment decision in the Western Section of the proposed South Mountain Freeway and to give the historical perspective for this project. Continuing members, who do not wish to stay for the historical perspective, will be given the option of leaving at that point.

There are a number of materials that were given to you including the updated operating agreement and documents to be discussed during this meeting

I would like to start with introductions.

[INTRODUCTIONS MADE BY CAT MEMBERS]

Tom Keller: Please take a moment to review the agenda. Notice that activities have been broken into two parts.

At the previous CAT meeting, we discussed the potential for the team to tour the corridor to get a perspective of the project. We have created a survey that Joy Butler is handing out for your thoughts on the bus tour. Please fill out the survey tonight and we will pick them up before or at the break. Fred Erickson has put together a virtual helicopter tour of the project area that will be shown in a minute. The right-of-way that will be shown is approximate. This will help give you a picture of the area where the buses will not be able to go on the tour. The video is 5 minutes and 40 seconds in length.

[VIRTUAL HELECOPTER TOUR PRESENTED – available on the project Web site]

CAT Member Question: How old is this information?

Fred Erickson: Well my house is on here and it was built two years ago, so it is less than two years old.

Public Question: [Referring to particular scene in virtual helicopter tour] At this location, what streets are the boundaries?

Ben Spargo: 62nd Avenue is on the right.

Tom Keller: So what do you think of the virtual tour? Is this an accurate view or would you also like the bus tour? Joy is now passing around the bus tour survey. The survey includes spaces where you can let us know when you would like to take the tour. Please complete this survey as soon as possible since we will be collecting them shortly.

Timothy Tait: A member of the project team will be in attendance on the bus tour to provide a narrative.

Tom Keller: Dave Lafferty has just arrived. Dave, please give us an introduction.

[Member introduces himself].

CAT Member Question: Can we see the 101 alignments?

Timothy Tait: Tonight, we will be reviewing all the Western Section alignments but this will close the book on all the Western Sections alignments, besides 55th Avenue.

CAT Member Question: Will the bus tour include stopping near the park to hike and see the area?

Timothy Tait: Hiking will be an option for those able bodied persons who wish to do so.

Tom Keller: Again, any public questions regarding this issue should be written on the blue comment cards and will be addressed later in the evening. Joy has extra cards in the back of the room.

CAT Member Question: Is there any chance of getting a below-grade design for this freeway?

Timothy Tait: At this point, ADOT has not released anything but an at-grade profile.

CAT Member Question: Will this be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement?

Timothy Tait: Yes.

CAT Member Question: (On the virtual helicopter tour video, two red lines signified the estimated right of way.) Which objects in this corridor will be removed? Will everything in the red lined area be demolished with the freeway construction?

Timothy Tait: Yes, generally anything located within the red lines would not survive.

Tom Keller: I have a reminder for everyone. By the end of this meeting we will talk about when and where we will be meeting next. We will also be discussing future meeting topics.

And now, Matt Burdick will give a presentation on the history behind ADOT's decision for 55th Avenue being the preferred Western Section alignment.

Matt Burdick: Thanks for being here. Tonight I will recap and give the history which led to the decision on the 55th Avenue alignment and how the CAT formed their decision.

When this project was being evaluated in 2001, it was thought that this would be a three year study process. At the time, ADOT developed the CAT, which was composed by a variety of stakeholders that would be interactive in the decision of the Western Section alternative selection process. The purpose of the CAT was to hear about the project, give feedback to ADOT, and report on the project to the organizations that each CAT member represented.

From 2001-2005, 40 CAT meetings were held. There was much information that was reviewed and the CAT gave us great input and discussion on the Western Section alternatives. Much of the information was technical and included topics, such as water resources, farmland, hazardous materials, right-of-way costs, economic impact, and public input.

In April 2006, the project team worked through a process summarizing the five Western Section alternatives, which included three connection points near Loop 101. The impacts of each of these alternatives were shown to the CAT, who discussed the matter in detail. The CAT used that information to come up with their own criteria in the process of developing their recommendation. The CAT recommended that the South Mountain Freeway Western Section be located at Loop 101 alignment. The recommendation was not specific about which one of the three Loop 101 alternatives was recommended.

A copy of the letter that the CAT sent to ADOT recommending the Loop 101 as the preferred Western Section alignment has been placed in this PowerPoint presentation. I have highlighted and outlined the different criteria that the CAT used as part of the process. When the CAT evaluated the Western Section alternatives, the Loop 101 alternatives scored the highest. However, the CAT expressed a concern that there would be impacts surrounding the corridor should the freeway be located at the Loop 101.

ADOT took the input from the CAT and looked very closely at the impacts. It was determined that the City of Tolleson would have drastic economic impacts should any of the Loop 101 Western Section alternatives be selected. Another concern was the result of the evaluation of the associated regional traffic implications should one of the Loop 101 alternates be selected. In a minute, Bob Hazlett with the Maricopa Association of Governments will discuss these implications. Based on the impacts to the City of Tolleson, the traffic analysis, and homeland security concerns, it was ADOT's recommendation that the Western Section connection be made at 55th Avenue.

With this recommendation, it was determined that the negative economic impact would affect the City of Phoenix by less than one percent, whereas the City of Tolleson would have been affected by 8 to 13 percent should the Western Section of the freeway be aligned at the Loop 101. This economic impact for the City of Tolleson would also have affected the availability of city services for the public.

Bob Hazlett will now discuss the regional traffic implications and how they relate to the potential South Mountain Freeway.

Tom Keller: While Bob is getting his presentation ready, we can collect the bus tour forms from you.

Matt Burdick: With the 55th Avenue recommendation, there was extensive coordination with the City of Phoenix and the Department of Homeland Security. In the West Valley, the tank farm is a security issue. The 55th Avenue decision also involved evaluating the freeway's potential implications on the tank farm so as to not create any security concerns.

Tom Keller: Bob Hazlett is a senior engineer who works on transportation planning for the Phoenix metro area. He will be discussing what MAG does and where we are in the process of traffic studies since the CAT last met.

Bob Hazlett: MAG provided a packet of information to the CAT members back in January that discussed many of these items. The basis of the presentation tonight is to review the information for everyone and to make the new members aware of MAG.

MAG is the Phoenix metropolitan planning organization that has been designated by the Federal Highway Administration and the State of Arizona. Its 28 members discuss regional traffic issues. Every city in the Valley has a representative that is a member. Other members include the Native American communities, such as the Fort McDowell community.

When you look at planning activities, such as land use or air quality, MAG's Transportation Group has been forecasting public travel demands so that the Valley can adjust and remain in compliance with Federal air quality standards. Open space study project teams recently released socioeconomic data with a little more detail than what I am showing tonight.

The Transportation Group is the largest division of MAG. This group is relatively small on a nation level, but we look at a large variety of transit options: biking, walking, carpooling, high-occupancy vehicle lanes, bike lanes, and rail options, including commuter rail. MAG has a Continuing Construction Operation and Safety Group. MAG proposes telecommuting options and has a telephone line to help promote carpooling.

Nationally, MAG's largest division is the Air Quality Group. They typically are asking themselves if each community is meeting clean air standards. Another issue is PM10 dust or the small dust particles that exist in the larger cities. The Air Quality Group is tasked to figure out how to bring it under control.

MAG also has a Human Services Group. They help the homeless and others with job placement as well as provide other services. You can get more information about MAG by going to the Web site – www.mag.maricopa.gov.

It is part of MAG's job to address Valley population growth concerns and relate how this will affect the area's transportation system. The Valley is growing and will continue this rapid growth for some time. MAG also looks at area land use and each city's General Plan. MAG is currently looking at what the Valley's population will be in 2050 when Arizona is projected to be the 5th largest state. The U.S. Census Bureau is using a new term – megapolitan – to describe a huge projected population in a region which would include multiple cities whose growth is merging together. The Valley is considered one of ten megapolitan areas in the country. The megapolitan area extends from Nogales to north of Prescott.

MAG is looking closely at growth patterns of the Valley cities to determine their futures – if the city were to build out, recessions, and housing cycles. If the city of Phoenix were to reach build out, the population would approach 5.5 million people. Phoenix is about halfway there. In other areas of the Valley, west of the White Tank Mountains, there are already 100 master plan communities that are preparing for 450,000 lots. MAG is anticipating this area to contain 3 million people by 2050. In the Hidden Valley area, which is from Casa Grande to Gila Bend, it is anticipated that there will be a population of 3 million people. It is estimated that Northern Pinal County will have 500,000 people and that the Superstition Vistas in the Gold Canyon area will have 1 million people.

Trip generation is important to MAG. MAG looks at how many trips Valley commuters take each day. Currently, the Valley estimates that commuters are taking 10 million trips per day. By 2050, it is estimated that Valley commuters will be taking 40 million trips.

Residential growth in the southwest continues to develop where many communities are being developed. The Estrella Mountain Ranch development has been entitled for 60,000 lots; Verrado 20,000; and Anthem has already reached their build-out limit. One future residential site in Hassayampa Valley is making plans for an 84,000 acre community. This would be equivalent to the size of Dayton, Ohio or two Tempes. The Town of Bellmont will eventually be the size of Tempe. MAG has noticed that there is some infill in the Southeast Valley. Among the big developments in the West Valley are job centers located near the University of Phoenix Stadium and in the City of Surprise. The Town of Buckeye has plans for large industrial areas and this area is building out. And this development is not a dream. The plans are out there.

The South Mountain Freeway has been talked about at the regional level since 1983. There was a funding shortfall in 1988, which caused the planning of this freeway to be delayed. In 1997, the Governor was looking at this freeway as being a possible toll road. With the approval of Proposition 400 in November 2004, the money was now in place to complete the study and fund the construction. This freeway is needed today. In the time that the South Mountain Freeway was not funded, people had made land use decisions assuming the future construction. There have been many decisions made that have been a part of the regional transportation fabric. The Regional Transportation Plan ties in the existing and future planned freeways and integrates them into a system that works together. The South Mountain Freeway is a part of this system.

MAG looked at the five Western Section alternatives for the South Mountain Freeway. MAG studied the elbow for northbound traffic on Interstate 10 (Papago Freeway) at 55th Avenue with the projected traffic on the proposed State Route 801 to see if there would be a big demand feeding into the South Mountain Freeway corridor. MAG also looked north and south of the Papago Freeway. It seemed that the majority of traffic is coming from the Loop 303. A majority of development along the Loop 303 will be commercial housing. Between 55th and 101st avenues, the street networks behave differently. Offset from the Loop 101, the South Mountain Freeway would behave like beltway loop. The control lines have very little difference between scenarios with traffic on the State Route 801 being less if the Loop 202 is connected here. The connection at 55th Avenue makes a lot of sense. It is 16 lanes wide and has a lot of capacity here. It could handle more traffic than the Loop 101 connection. If the Loop 101 alternative was selected then ADOT would need to develop more alternatives to I-10 in order for the regional traffic system to work.

MAG uses a rating scale, Level of Service, to rate how well traffic is operating in different segments of the regional transportation system. The worst conditions are rated Level of Service F, while the best rating is Level of Service A. MAG used this information to help determine that the best Western Section alternative would be the 55th Avenue connection with Interstate 10. This information was given to ADOT, but it was after the CAT recommendation for the Loop 101 connection.

For more information, you can contact me by phone at 602.254.6300 or by e-mail at bhazlett@mag.maricopa.gov.

Are there any questions?

CAT Member Question: When will the State Route 801 reliever freeway be constructed?

Matt Burdick: State Route 801 is currently being studied. The funding for the construction of this potential freeway is in the fourth phase of the Regional Transportation Plan beginning in 2021.

CAT Member Question: Is the South Mountain Freeway scheduled for construction in 2015?

Matt Burdick: The construction date will depend on this process.

CAT Member Comment: The way the information is presented is misleading. You present it like the public voted on it as a standalone measure which is not the case. The public voted for it because it included transit funding. This rubs me the wrong way.

Bob Hazlett: The South Mountain Freeway is part of a regional transportation system that ties in Valley traffic as a whole. The freeway has been recommended throughout the process from 1985 to the present time. In 1985 when the process started, the South Mountain Freeway was looked at as a single entity.

CAT Member Question: On the traffic study maps presented in the MAG presentation, between Loop 202 to Interstate 10, it looks like the traffic just disappears. Where would the traffic go if the South Mountain Freeway is not constructed? Wouldn't the vehicles use the surface streets?

Bob Hazlett: There is a map included in your packet of information that lists the surface street volumes. Both the freeway system and traffic on the local streets behave as different type systems, which is not an apple to apple comparison. It may appear that traffic is disappearing but the traffic volumes are actually the same showing that the study area model is behaving properly.

CAT Member Question: Is truck traffic factored into the model?

Bob Hazlett: A sophisticated traffic model takes a look at the actual economic and commercial truck activity. The amount of trucks varies from one zone to another but all zones figure into the model. There would be commercial vehicle traffic on the freeway corridor.

CAT Member Question: Have you published the number of commercial trucks that would use the South Mountain Freeway?

Bob Hazlett: These numbers are not published but I can get them to you.

CAT Member Question: My question regards the Gila River Indian Community. It appears that when MAG is studying their traffic projection maps, the GRIC land is not figured into the equation. Right now, there are some vehicles accessing these lands, and this appears to not be taken into account. I have read articles discussing future GRIC projects, such as industrial parks, strip malls, casinos, an airport, and possibly federal laws allowing for non-GRIC residential development. This will have a large impact on future traffic levels. I am having a hard time with your traffic modeling when this GRIC traffic is not accounted for.

Bob Hazlett: That is an excellent point. MAG does not create land-use policies. These policies are left up to the Valley cities who give their information to us. MAG is not at liberty to make any land-use projections outside the purview so we can only use the best information that the cities and Native American communities are willing to share with us. This was the case with the Loop 101 Pima Freeway.

CAT Member Question: Why would this be considered land-use planning? When you are doing the modeling, you are providing an educated guess about the future traffic volumes.

Bob Hazlett: If MAG made these land-use assumptions, it would be considered an official forecast and would make us legally liable.

CAT Member Question: Can you describe when the information used in the modeling is updated?

Bob Hazlett: That information is updated every 4 years. The information we are currently using is from 2006.

CAT Member Question: On your build out and increased job growth projections, I question your assumption that drivers will be traveling from the east to west Valley and not traveling to Downtown Phoenix. What are MAG and ADOT doing to promote that people who live in the Village should work in the Village?

Bob Hazlett: When MAG studies area traffic demands, we use current data from surveys to make sure our models are working. We look at interregional traffic and why people travel the way they do. We use the average trip data from surveys to find out if the information supports the information that the traffic models are providing. It has shown that there are vehicles that are traveling from one side of the Valley to the other on a daily basis. One of the reasons that people travel great distances is because of where businesses are locating. For instance, 300 business owners were surveyed at the Scottsdale Airpark. The consensus was that the businesses were located there because they were closest to executive housing and not the labor pool. It has been seen that even the businesses that have amenities on site such as, electric cars, only can retain 25 percent of the working traffic in the best situations.

MAG and ADOT cannot control where people live and work. We live in a society where people live where they want to live and work where they want to work.

CAT Member Question: How does the traffic modeling relate to the air quality modeling? Currently, the Valley air is really bad and we are already not meeting the standards of most unhealthy pollutants, such as carbon monoxide, particulates, and ozone.

Bob Hazlett: The traffic models are sophisticated and work close with air quality numbers. With all the data that is used, it takes MAG's fastest computers four days to run

and complete each traffic model. MAG is working with the best data we have and trying to update land use and socioeconomic data when new information becomes available. The traffic models are integrated with the trip generation data and all this information also drives the air quality modeling.

CAT Member Question: Will the traffic modeling tell us how many commercial trucks will be on the South Mountain Freeway at the State Route 801 elbow when both are constructed?

Bob Hazlett: Yes, the traffic modeling takes into account the potential State Route 801 freeway and will estimate the commercial truck activity.

CAT Member Question: What is the difference between a “beltway” and “bypass”?

Bob Hazlett: A beltway is generally half the length of a bypass. A bypass usually loops the entire city.

CAT Member Question: Will we be discussing either the Western or Eastern Section impacts before or after the break?

Tom Keller: We have provided a matrix with the backup material for the Western and Eastern Section impacts that is in your information packet. This information supports the points that Matt provided in his presentation earlier.

CAT Member Question: I feel that there are mistakes in the matrix. I would like to review this information.

Tom Keller: Okay.

Tom Keller: Tonight, we are offering two opportunities for the public to comment – now, and at the end of the meeting.

Public Question: Can you give the public a projected release date for the Draft EIS and not “maybe early 2008”? ADOT has spent five and a half years developing the Draft EIS and I think the Draft EIS release date should be somewhat known.

Matt Burdick: This is not possible at this time. The Draft EIS is undergoing the Federal review process, which includes a thorough review with their legal sufficiency people. Because of this, at this time I can not give you a calendar date. For right now, it is estimated that the Draft EIS will be released sometime next year. As we get further along in the process, we will begin having a much better idea of the timeframe.

Public Question: Why has ADOT been so lethargic in responding to the requests from the Gila River Indian Community for access road improvements along Interstate 10?

Matt Burdick: An access study is underway. ADOT has been working with the GRIC and has been responsive with such information as: community access, capacity, and economic impacts. ADOT will continue to work with them on this matter.

Public Question: Why did ADOT bifurcate the South Mountain Freeway CAT decision-making process between the Western and Eastern Sections?

Matt Burdick: This process was split because of the unique land-use situations in both the Western and Eastern Sections.

Public Question: What words of assurance can ADOT provide to the newly reconstituted CAT that their decision on the Eastern Section of the proposed South Mountain Freeway will be taken seriously and that this decision hasn't already been made?

Matt Burdick: From ADOT's perspective, the decision has not been made. Ultimately, the CAT will come to a decision for this potential freeway of "build" versus "no build". ADOT will study any other alternatives that come available but there aren't any others at this time. What makes the decision difficult is that there are many factors involved in making the ultimate decision. The CAT will be encouraged to evaluate all of the factors and work through these in order to come to a decision.

Public Question: Does MAG's traffic modeling include arterial streets like Liberty Lane in Ahwatukee? If so, is this data available to the public? If not, why did MAG in their 2007 Fiscal Year Final Phase Opportunity Report make the statement on page 14 that additionally, construction of the South Mountain Freeway reduces traffic on the surrounding arterial street network?

Bob Hazlett: The traffic modeling does include traffic volume levels on arterial streets. The studies have shown that in the future without the South Mountain Freeway, traffic levels increase 2 to 1 on the arterial streets. Should the freeway be built, traffic would flow much better on the arterial streets, including Chandler Boulevard and Ray Road. In addition, traffic would also be better on the Interstate 10 interchanges.

Tom Keller: Joy will now pass out the CAT member evaluation forms. If you happen to be leaving at the break, please make sure Joy gets your completed copy of the evaluation form.

Matt Burdick: The CAT's mission is to make a decision on the South Mountain Freeway whether it should be built or not. Much information has already been provided. The revised matrix and technical summaries are currently on the Web site. We also will see the CAT response for a field trip. Other information to be discussed in future CAT meetings will include traffic impacts, tank farm profile options, and air quality. Of course, when it is released a copy of the Draft EIS will be provided to the CAT. It is projected that the CAT will be making their recommendation some time next year.

Tom Keller: With that said what are your opinions of this location?

CAT Member Comment: I recommend that we meet at the Pecos Community Center.

CAT Member Question: Where is the Pecos Community Center?

Tom Keller: The Pecos Community Center is located near Interstate 10 and Pecos Road. Access to the facility is from Chandler Boulevard.

CAT Member Comment: I think the South Mountain Community College is a very good location since it is located in the middle of the study area.

CAT Member Comment: With the length of this freeway from point A to point B, the location should be in the center.

CAT Member Comment: I agree, we should meet in the middle. During rush hour, it would be difficult getting to the Pecos Community Center from Interstate 10 at Chandler Boulevard. The meetings should also be kept in one place and not moved around.

Tom Keller: For the new members benefit, we have been discussing this issue since June. Is there a motion on the floor to move the CAT meetings to the Pecos Community Center?

CAT Member Comment: I motion.

CAT Member Comment: I second.

Tom Keller: All those in favor: 7. All of those opposed: 14. Motion fails.

Tom Keller: Is there a motion to keep the CAT meetings at South Mountain Community College?

CAT Member Comment: I motion.

CAT Member Comment: I second.

Tom Keller: The motion is to stay here. All those in favor: 16. All of those opposed: 2. Motion passes.

Tom Keller: Joy and Tim, do we have arrangements to continue to meet here?

Timothy Tait: We will continue to work on securing meeting rooms at this facility.

CAT Member Comment: In the interest of being fair, I think we should continue meeting here with maybe one meeting at the Pecos Community Center. By the way, my offer for carpooling is still open.

Tom Keller: For the last two months of meetings, we have promised that future meetings wouldn't be scheduled without having topics to discuss. Are there any recommendations for topics for our next CAT meeting?

CAT Member Comment: I think we should discuss air quality.

CAT Member Comment: We should discuss the corridor shift near the tank farms.

CAT Member Comment: I would like an update on the progress of the EIS.

CAT Member Comment: I would like to hear about the framework of the EIS so we will be familiar with the format before we receive a copy to review.

Tom Keller: That may be difficult to do.

CAT Member Comment: I would like to review the Eastern Section information that is on the matrix that was handed out tonight. The information does not make sense.

CAT Member Comment: It would be relevant to address some of the other projects that would affect the South Mountain Freeway, such as in the far-west Valley.

Tom Keller: Tim, how would that play out?

Timothy Tait: In the far-west Valley, beyond the Loop 101 connection conflict, I don't think the other projects would impact this potential freeway.

Tom Keller: What is the best topic to discuss at the next meeting?

Timothy Tait: I suggest that we hold the field trip in October.

CAT Member Comment: But we were only prompted to give our September availability on the survey.

Timothy Tait: Okay. We will see what everyone put for their September availability and then reassess to see if having the field trip in October might be more appropriate. We could discuss regional projects and the tank farm shift at the September CAT meeting.

CAT Member Question: What other information is available for the next meeting?

Timothy Tait: I am suggesting that we discuss regional projects and the tank farm issues.

CAT Member Question: Can we discuss air quality?

Timothy Tait: It will take a little longer to pull that information together. We are considering discussing this topic in two CAT meetings – one before and one after the Draft EIS is released. I don't think we can prepare the information for the next meeting.

CAT Member Question: Couldn't we do a status check on air quality? MAG and ADOT already have this information.

Timothy Tait It is best to wait on presenting that topic.

CAT Member Question: So tank farm issues and regional projects will be discussed at the next meeting?

Tom Keller: Let's do the field trip in October and we will continue our monthly CAT meetings in September with tank farm issues, regional projects, and an EIS format discussion.

Fred Erickson: Should I send out some potential dates for the October field trip?

Timothy Tait: I see the field trip as separate meeting, in which we can cover Western Section corridor issues.

Tom Keller: We can do field trip as a separate item. Has there been a preference on September availability?

Fred Erickson: Should we collect dates for October?

Tom Keller: We can collect potential dates for an October field trip through e-mail and phone calls.

CAT Member Comment: I think we should have the field trip in October.

Tom Keller: Okay. We will continue our regular monthly CAT meetings in September with a discussion of the tank farm issues and regional projects.

CAT Member Question: What about the discussion of the EIS?

Timothy Tait: We can have a discussion about what constitutes an EIS at the next meeting. The next CAT meeting will be at this location. Do we have a date? Are we going to continue holding these meetings on Thursday?

CAT Member Comment: On our current schedule, the next meeting would be September 27.

Tom Keller: Okay. Let's prepare to have the next meeting on September 27 at 5:30 p.m. Make sure you turn in your evaluation forms to Joy before you leave.

Timothy Tait: I have a conflict with holding the next CAT meeting on September 27. Unless there is a strong objection, we could hold the meeting on September 20.

[BREAK]

Tom Keller: At this point, we have a presentation on the South Mountain Freeway history by Mike Bruder.

I appreciate the way the new CAT members have responded on e-mails for attendance. I have questions for you regarding the volume of documents that are prepared and sent out by e-mail. Should we send out this information to you in advance, which means that you are printing these large documents? How can we figure this out? What can be done to limit the amount of paper and ink that CAT members are using to print out this information? Do you feel that you need printed materials in advance? What about if we send an e-mail indicating which materials will be provided in printed form at the CAT meeting?

CAT Member Comment: Yes, sending an e-mail indicating which items will be provided in printed form at the CAT meeting would be nice.

CAT Member Comment: I have a problem printing the graphs and foldout charts. The file size is large and it doesn't work well with my computer. Since the graphics are in color, this is not cheap to print.

Tom Keller: So notifying you which printed materials will be provided at the CAT meeting will work for you?

CAT Member Comment: Yes, that would work well.

Joy Butler: Any documents provided to you by e-mail are provided in hardcopy form at CAT meetings.

CAT Member Question: How many e-mails did you send notifying us of this CAT meeting?

Tom Keller: Two e-mail meeting reminders were sent. One was a meeting reminder and the other included meeting items, such as the agenda and matrix.

CAT Member Comment: I got the e-mail with the large file, but not the meeting reminder.

CAT Member Comment: It seems like the meeting information should be sent out a little earlier. It would be better to have a little more time for us to review prior to the CAT meeting.

Joy Butler: If you happen to miss a CAT meeting and the hardcopy information that was distributed, I will get this information to you for inclusion in your binder.

Mike Bruder: I will be taking you through the history of the South Mountain Freeway from the beginning to where we are today. As you can see on the 1985 freeway map, everything shown in red was complete. On this map, there was also a provision for the South Mountain Freeway. This freeway was originally called the 218 freeway.

Throughout the process, a no build situation has always been considered. The Paradise Parkway is one situation where decision to not build a freeway had the effect of taking it off the map.

In the early planning stages, ADOT developed an Environmental Assessment, which looks at all of the environmental impacts. The EA was completed in January 1988. The Design Concept Report was completed in September of 1988. Due to funding shortfalls at the time, the South Mountain Freeway was then classified as having an unfunded status.

In the 1990s, the potential South Mountain Freeway languished. ADOT was able to acquire some right-of-way, but as the lack of funding became apparent, the acquisition of right-of-way was halted.

In 2001, ADOT initiated a new study to take another look at the potential South Mountain Freeway corridor. The purpose of this study was to address changes that had taken place in the study area since the EA was completed. At this point, because of environmental impacts, it was determined that an Environmental Impact Statement would be required. ADOT would have to reevaluate the reasonable options in the southeast to southwest Valley. The items addressed in the EIS are comprehensive. This is why a study of this magnitude takes so long.

This potential freeway is being developed for design year 2030 when it is projected that the Valley will have over 6 million people. Some of the things coming out of this study are that should the freeway be built, there will be faster travel times, less arterial street congestion, and optimization of the regional freeway system. Without any individual part of this system, it doesn't work. It is projected that the South Mountain Freeway would provide a \$400 million per year savings as opposed to the wasted time in gridlock should the freeway not be constructed.

There were 30 alternatives that were brought forward at this point. The alternatives showed a wide variety of corridor locations for the freeway. ADOT decided to split the study area into an Eastern and Western Section. In the Western Section, 6 potential connection points with Interstate 10 were identified. Some of the connection points ended up being too close to existing or future system traffic interchanges. There needs to be a 3 mile separation between a traffic interchange and the next nearest traffic interchange. This meant that ADOT would be evaluating three remaining potential corridors. These corridors were studied to see how each related to the area's environmental and engineering constraints. In the Eastern Section, the same things were done.

In 2003, MAG adopted a new Regional Transportation Plan. This Plan was funded by Proposition 400, which was approved by voters in November 2004. The Regional Transportation Plan included right-of-way and construction funding for the South Mountain Freeway. The Regional Transportation Plan map is available on the MAG Web site: www.mag.maricopa.gov.

As you know, currently ADOT is developing the Draft EIS. It is currently being reviewed by the Federal Highway Administration for legal sufficiency. Following this review, the Draft EIS will be made available to the public. After the public review period and public hearings, there will be a final decision of either building or not building this freeway. The decision will be formally announced in a Record of Decision.

The CAT will continue to meet throughout this process. The project team also has plans for public involvement by holding community office hours, where the public can discuss their questions with project team staff and public hearings, where all public comments and questions will be recorded by a court reporter and included in the project record.

CAT Member Comment: Can you go back to the Regional Transportation Plan slide? The timeline it shows for the Federal review process is deceptive.

Mike Bruder: The Federal review process is estimated. Once the Draft EIS becomes public, there will be a 45 to 90 day review period. Once this period ends, we will have a series of public hearings.

CAT Member Question: Will the EIS evaluate air quality and compare what the levels will be should the freeway be built versus a no build situation?

Mike Bruder: Yes, the air analysis will be evaluated and compared in both situations.

CAT Member Question: During the funding shortfall in the '80s and '90s, was the South Mountain Freeway the only freeway that was not funded?

Mike Bruder: No, the Loop 303 was also unfunded.

CAT Member Question: Did you mention that there was some right-of-way acquisition during this time for the South Mountain Freeway?

Mike Bruder: There was some acquisition in the Ahwatukee area and a few minor parcels in the West Valley.

Tom Keller: At this time, do we have any blue question cards from the public?

Public Comment: As recently as 2006, ADOT said that the South Mountain Freeway would have minimal impact on traffic at the Broadway Curve. Earlier tonight it was said

that traffic on the Broadway Curve would be reduced by seven percent should the freeway be built. The information presented tonight is not at all compelling.

Tom Keller: Did you have a question with that comment?

Public Question: The Western Section alignments have been known for years. Why did MAG suddenly discover that the Loop 101 proposed corridor was inefficient in the weeks following the CAT recommendation of the Loop 101 alignment?

Tom Keller: Bob Hazlett from MAG is no longer here to answer that question.

CAT Member Question: Can we get a response follow up from Bob?

Tom Keller: Yes, we will have Bob give us a follow up response.

[ADJORNMENT AT 8:26 PM]